

THE SACRIFICE

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IN THREE PARTS—PART ONE.

JUDGE Hargrave walked rapidly up the path that led to the old white house with the wide verandahs; past orderly box hedges enclosing quaintly designed flower beds that studded the velvety green lawn like so many brilliants, and furnished a restful setting to the mansion that nestled modestly in the cluster of beech trees; and when he had come to the foot of the broad white steps, he stopped and mopped his forehead.

"It is warm," he remarked, to himself, and promptly took a seat on the lowermost step.

There he sat fanning himself with his panama hat, and dabbing furtively at the little streams that persisted in flowing down beneath his collar. So occupied was he in these twin occupations that he was quite startled when a deliciously soft voice from above him remarked:

"If you moved up here in the shade, you'd have less to complain of."

Looking up he discovered first of all a pair of deep hazel eyes gazing frankly at him, and immediately sprang to his feet to greet the owner of them, a girl who stood leaning over the verandah rail.

"Good morning," responded the judge. "Do you imagine if I should dress in white I should look as cool as you do?"

"You might," rejoined the girl, smilingly, "but to get the full effect you should remain in a deep chair and forego such exertion as walking from Exeter to this mansion of the contented on a June day. Come up."

As she spoke she pulled up a chair and motioned for him to sit beside her. Rather tall for a girl, she yet had the appearance of grace that is not uncommon with women of her height, and the light brown hair that was brushed back from her wide forehead seemed to accentuate the inordinate repose of her whole expression. Judge Hargrave sank thankfully into the chair and looked at her smilingly.

"Do you know, my dear," he said, "you remind me more of your mother each time I look at you. Your hair is the same color as hers was when she was young, your appearance of infinite capacity is quite as alarming, and your height is distinctly disconcerting to an old man of ordinary build. Yes," he sighed, "You are very like your mother."

The girl smiled at him, and patted his wrinkled hand as it lay on the arm of the chair. Then her face took on the grave look of a woman with memories, and she said, softly,

"You were good friends, weren't you?"

"She refused me three times, my dear," said the old gentleman, whimsically. "If she hadn't been so persistent I might have been your father. However, she preferred Arthur Penryhn, and now that I look back at it—he sighed—"I don't know that I blame her. He was a fine looking young fellow thirty years ago. Thirty years ago; it's a long time, my dear; a very long time."

THE judge stopped fanning himself, and looked off reminiscently in the direction of the river that shimmered in the sunlight a quarter of a mile away. The girl leaned forward and laid her hand on his arm.

"Never mind, old friend," she said gently. "She was always very fond of you, and when she lost him—father—it was to you she turned in her trouble. That was twenty years ago. I can just remember it. I was seven then, I think, and Alice was a little baby."

The old man said nothing, but continued to gaze, unseeing, at the river, and the girl, understanding his mood, forbore to interrupt him. Suddenly he turned to her and took her hands.

"She was a wonderful woman, Christine," he said, "a very wonderful woman, and you're very like her." He paused again, and then went on.

"She always trusted me, I think, in spite of my continued proposals to her in earlier days."

"Trusted you?" said the girl, quickly. "Indeed she did. When she knew the end had come, she whispered to me to go to you with my troubles, and I've always done it, haven't I; in these five years? And you've always been so good."

"Tush, child," chided the old man. "You've had no troubles; no real troubles, though your little difficulties, I'll admit, must have seemed mountainous to a girl of twenty-two with a young sister to look after. By the way, how is Alice?"

"Oh, she's much better; more like her old self in the last few weeks," Christine said, brightly, and then turned to him with an air of solemnity. "Judge Richard Hargrave, if I should confide to you a secret, would you swear to lock it up within your magisterial self?"

He looked at her quickly, and saw the laughter in her eyes.

"I'm a well of secrets, my dear," he replied. "I'm almost loaded down with the weight of those I carry about. Come; what fearsome thing have you to tell?"

She glanced about her with mock seriousness, as if fearful of eavesdroppers; then leaned toward him.

"Hush!" she whispered theatrically. "Alice is engaged."

Judge Hargrave caught at her hand, which lay upon his

sleeve.

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turned, "To

do you think of

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judge said gravely.

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but Mayne! Why,

"You don't like Harry Mortimer, do you?" Christine said reflectively.

"It is not for me to like or dislike him," replied Judge Hargrave.

"Then I will put it this way; you don't approve of him," said Christine.

I DON'T approve of him as a companion for a young girl. I'll go that far," answered the old man. He's not to be depended on, I'm afraid, and he belongs to a class I cannot find it agreeable to admit to the society of friends I have an interest in. But Will Mayne! Ah, that's different. He's a fine fellow, and he'll make a name for himself at the bar some of these days, and above all he is that rarest of things in this generation; he's a gentleman, and I use the word in its strictest sense, my dear." He turned to look at her quickly. "Somehow, do you know, I had an idea that it was you in whom Mayne was interested."

Christine flushed quickly; then clasped her hands in front of her, and walked over to the rail of the verandah. There she stood silent for some moments, and finally turned and came back to him smiling a little sadly.

"You're such an old friend," she began, "that I feel I may make a confidant of you, and so perhaps you'll understand what I'm going to say. It's rather difficult for me to tell it to anyone, but I do want you to know how it is. You see, for some time I thought as you did; that it was I—here she stopped and flushed again—and he even asked me to marry him."

"And you refused?"

"I thought it best," she replied slowly. "You see Alice—in fact I just declined the honor," she finished lamely.

"I think I see," commented Judge Hargrave, slowly. "More perhaps than you think, and I want to say to you, my dear, that you are quite as wonderful a woman as your dear mother was." He leaned back in his chair and contemplated the distressed face before him. "Few could have done that," he muttered to himself. "Very few."

Both remained silent for a time, and each studied the distant blue hills that hazily marked the horizon, then Judge Hargrave leaned toward the girl.

"When is it to be announced?" he asked.

"Mr. Mayne is coming this afternoon, and perhaps Alice will consent to have it known soon," answered Christine. "It will perhaps be better to have it over and done with—irrevocable, you know."

"Yes," said the old man, looking at her profile keenly, "better for Alice's peace of mind; better for Mayne's." He rose from his chair. "I will be

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